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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Statement submitted by International Federation on Ageing, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; American Psychological Association, Anglican Consultative Council, The Center for Migration Studies of New York, Child Welfare League of America, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Social Workers, International Kolping Society, International Union of Psychological Science and World Federation of the Ukrainian Women's Organizations, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Gray Panthers, a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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As we approach the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, we are all keenly aware that we are facing a rapidly changing world which offers both new challenges and new possibilities. The family, recognized universally as the foundation for perpetuation of social and cultural values and the peaceful stability of society, must be a focus for direct intervention as implementation of the Millennium Development Goals are undertaken. In these times of economic globalization, political conflicts and crises, we strongly urge governments to review their family policies, and specifically consider addressing the following crucial family issues.

Migrant Families – The *vulnerabilities* of immigrants and their family members as well as their *strengths* as contributors to development, require the collaborative attention of the international community. The rapidly growing number of these families can no longer be ignored, and must be integrated into the fabric of society.

Women and Children – The most essential element of the family, (i.e., women and children) are the most vulnerable in a crisis situation. We urge governments to examine the current conditions of severe deprivation in which millions of women and children are living, and reverse the trend of reducing basic social, medical, psychological, and economic services. Consistent with the principles of the UN convention on the rights of the child, we also consider the provision of child care, both within and outside the family, to be a crucial component of the social, cognitive, emotional, and personality development of children—and therefore of the family and society. Access to affordable child care is vital to the economic development of the family. Any strategy to increase employment opportunities and reduce poverty for the family must also include child care.

Family Economic Self-Sufficiency – We strongly support a variety of major and innovative economic programs and investments that foster the economic self-sufficiency of the family. These include ownership and registration of land and other property, micro-credit lending for family-run endeavors, and programs aimed at providing the skills and educational opportunities to families that will enhance their economic position in society.

HIV/AIDS and the Family – The ravaging pandemic of HIV/AIDS has an especially devastating impact on the most vulnerable, i.e. women, children and families. Immediate action is therefore required to provide appropriate medical psychological, educational, and social service, as well as economic aid to families in order to deal with this emergency.

We firmly believe that the preceding are critical needs for families throughout the world. These issues must be given serious consideration by governments and NGO's and action must be taken by appropriate parties as we move forward on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.